

# JÓVENES, FRACASO ESCOLAR Y PROGRAMAS DE SEGUNDA OPORTUNIDAD

## *YOUTH, ACADEMIC FAILURE AND SECOND CHANCE TRAINING PROGRAMMES*

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### RESUMEN

Cuando los jóvenes deciden abandonar la escuela se encuentran en una situación de vulnerabilidad (fracaso escolar) que les dificulta su participación activa en los contextos ya no sólo educativos, también socioeconómicos e incrementa su riesgo de exclusión social, laboral y educativa. Esta investigación analiza esta situación de vulnerabilidad y evalúa aquellos factores que conducen a la misma, tales como factores personales, educativos, comportamentales, de percepción del dominio de las competencias básicas o procesos de orientación, analizando en profundidad algunos de ellos. Asimismo, examina qué alternativas formativas tienen estos jóvenes que les permite minimizar su riesgo de exclusión y mejorar su inclusión social, laboral y educativa. La investigación se desarrolla en el contexto de Cataluña. Usando una metodología mixta (cuantitativa y cualitativa) y un modelo de triangulación de fuentes (228 jóvenes, 16 tutores y 9 agentes empresariales) y de instrumentos para la recogida de información (*cuestionarios* aplicados a los jóvenes, *entrevistas* a tutores y agentes empresariales y *análisis documental* de 17 programas de formación para el trabajo en 7 municipios de Barcelona), esta investigación muestra como el fracaso escolar es el resultado de múltiples factores y dimensiones interrelacionadas. Asimismo, también muestra que los programas de formación y orientación para el trabajo pueden ser considerados como programas de segunda oportunidad para acceder al mercado de trabajo, o continuar en el sistema educativo.

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**Palabras clave:** Fracaso escolar; programas de formación para el trabajo; jóvenes no cualificados; competencia básicas; oportunidades de trabajo.

## ABSTRACT

When young people decide to drop out of school they find themselves in a vulnerable situation (academic failure), that drags them out from having an active participation not only in educational context, but also socio-economical ones, increasing at the same time their risk of social, labour market and educational exclusion. This research analyses this situation of vulnerability and evaluates the possible factors that lead to it, such as personal and educational factors, behaviours, perception of mastery of key competences or guidance processes, studying several of them in a deeper way. It examines what kind of training alternatives these young people have in order to minimize their risk of exclusion and to improve their inclusion in society, labour market and educational context. The research is developed in Cataluña area. Using a mixed methodology (qualitative and quantitative) and a model for the triangulation of sources (228 young people, 16 tutors, and 9 entrepreneurs) and instruments for the data collection (questionnaires applied to young people, interviews to tutors and entrepreneurs, and documental analysis of 17 employment training programmes in 7 municipalities of Barcelona), this research demonstrates that academic failure is the result of multiple and interdependent factors and dimensions. It also shows that employment training and guidance programmes can be considered as a 'second chance' alternatives to access to the labour market or to retake educational programs.

**Key Words:** educational failure; employment training programmes; unskilled young people; key competences; employment opportunities.

## Introduction

The social and professional integration of people with difficulties in gaining access to the labour market is a process that demands consideration of the relationships between the labour activity and the active participation of the people in the community where they live and interact.

Wehmeyer (1992) affirms that working is a social right and a form of social participation. It provides the person with the resources to become independent, which in turn allows them to take decisions by themselves (self-determination). If a person works, they can be autonomous and independent. In other words, working increases the active and responsible participation of a person in the community. Thus, labour integration allows social integration and vice versa.

High rates of school dropout increase significantly young people's restrictions and their risk of exclusion in society, education and workplace. When a young have completed their training process, their risk of exclusion is less than their peers who have dropped out. For example, in Spain, 31.2% of people aged between 18 and 21 dropped out of school without academic credentials; in Spain this is GESO; (European Commission, 2011a, 2011b) and 48.56% of them are unemployed (INE, 2012). The statistics prove that educational exclusion prevents young people in socio-economic contexts from experiencing developmental processes vital to their transition to adulthood (Adame y Salvà, 2010; Côté y Bynner, 2008; Daniels y Cole, 2010; Parrilla, Gallego y Moríña, 2010).

This educational and economic reality is giving us great cause for concern. We would like to know what the situation of these young people is, why they dropped out of school, and what kind of alternatives they have now. We would also like to know how employment training programmes help them in their social, labour and educational reintegration.

To answer these questions is the purpose of the research presented here. This paper also suggests training and guidance processes as strategies to improve social, educational and job opportunities of people in vulnerable situations, especially young people at risk of exclusion. As the current labour market requires basic and new professional competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes), and the lifelong learning process is becoming a crucial strategy in achieving these (EUROSTAT, 2009a, 2009b), research efforts ought to go into this field, in thinking and rethinking training strategies according to the employment and educational needs of young people.

In summary, we can see how educational failure and training programmes are two central features of this research and that its objectives are: (1) To describe young people aged under 21, who dropped out of school without academic credentials and who are currently undertaking a professional training programme, (2) To establish what the causes of their academic failure are, and (3) To specify how professional training programmes are a second chance for their educational, social and professional integration.

To this end, we opt to use a mixed methodological approach (qualitative and quantitative research), a triangular model of instruments (questionnaire, interview, and document analysis) and sources (young people, tutors, and entrepreneurs), and a sample of 228 youths, 16 tutors, 9 entrepreneurs and 17 training programmes which were developed in 7 municipalities of Barcelona.

The outcomes of the research give us a common profile of young school leavers that are wholly conscious of their vulnerable situation; thus they decide to continue learning and to play an active part in professional training programmes as a viable route to their social and labour inclusion.

### *Vulnerability: Cause or consequence of the academic failure?*

People aged between 16 and 21 who have dropped out school is a section of the population with great difficulties in gaining access to employment, social and educational contexts. They are in a vulnerable situation and this prevents their active participation in educational and socio-economical contexts, which in turn increases their risk of exclusion (Amorós y Ayerbe, 2000; Fundación Luis Vives, 2007; Tezanos, 2004; Van Houten y Jacobs, 2005).

Parrilla, Gallego, and Moriña (2010) argue that the concept of a vulnerable situation is a complex one. For them and others such as Jurado and Olmos (2010), it is the result of many interrelated factors. Examples are high rates of school dropout, lack of public support, minimal qualifications, special educational needs, low social status, low incomes, job insecurity, bad health, low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, isolation, family breakdown, and lack of parental involvement (Wilkinson y Pickett, 2010). Each one of these is part of some interdependent dimensions; Olmos (2011) refers to health, institutional, educational, familiar and economic dimensions; therefore the factors of one dimension can be the cause of exclusion in another. For example, a person may be at risk of exclusion in two dimensions only, but either of these risk situations may prevent their participation in any other dimension. When this occurs, the person is excluded from the integration and/or inclusion processes. Thus, vulnerable factors are factors of exclusion (Cabrera y De Pablos, 2008; European Council of Laeken, 2001; Laparra y Pérez, 2007; Subirats, Gomà y Brugué, 2005).

Academic failure is an example of a vulnerable and an exclusion factor (González-Pienda *et al.*, 2000; Hair *et al.*, 2009). Some studies of academic failure (Adame y Salvà, 2010; Mora, 2010; Roca-Cobo, 2010) show as its antecedents some of the previous interrelated factors, and emphasize some of them such as health problems, economic needs, poor educational performance (especially in languages and mathematical subjects), low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, social representation, ethnicity, elder siblings leaving school early without credentials, or lack of flexible educational methods. Côté and Bynner (2008) write: "Social exclusion has its antecedents in a disadvantaged home life, lack of parental support for education, and continual poor performance through the education system" (p. 255).

Accordingly, we need to think of academic failure as a cause of socio-economic exclusion but only in connection with other vulnerable factors.

### *Employment training programmes: second chance programmes for youths in vulnerability situation?*

Gaining access to the labour market is part of the transition to adulthood, but not all young people go through the same style of transition because this will depend on the personal profile of each one. In this case, of young people who have dropped out school, the style of the transition process is determined by educational profile, and that is usually very short, precarious, disorganized and/or erratic (Parrilla, Guerrero y Moríña, 2010).

The transition process to adult life needs training and guidance processes. For example, Urra (1997) argues that social training programmes are crucial elements of labour integration and that the role of society is a key factor in these. Hair and others (2009) argue that professional training programmes can minimize young people's vulnerability in educational situations, and indeed enhance their transition process. Others as Terzian, Giesen, and MwBana (2009) argue that professional training programmes provide young people with resources for their personal, emotional, social, employment and educational development. All of them consider that training programmes prepare young people for the transition to adulthood. However, this only is possible if training programmes provide them with the chance to experience work (practical programmes) and to choose from a variety of activities and methods (flexible programmes), in the attempt to fulfil their needs, prospects and interests. Furthermore, the people on these training programmes are young people that dropped out of school, thus the employment training programmes should foster educational strategies distinct from the school strategies (Adame y Salvà, 2010).

When a young person finishes one of these employment training programmes, s/he should have improved her/his knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes to work and to learning. In other words, s/he ought to have developed key competences for lifelong learning. In terms of Tiana, Moya and Luengo (2011), skills, abilities, knowledge, motivation, values, attitudes, emotions, behaviours to face the new situations which adult life poses on a daily basis, or as Daniels (2001) writes, quoting Scardamalia and Bereiter (1996): "The kind of education that will best prepare students for life should foster: flexibility; creativity; problem-solving ability; technological literacy; information-finding skills; and lifelong readiness to learn" (p. 103).

European employment strategies which are addressed at improving the social and labour inclusion of vulnerable people are designed around the key concepts of training and guidance processes. For example, in Catalonia, some employment training programmes are being developed to improve the educational and labour opportunities of young people without qualifications, such as *Initial Professional Qualification Programmes* (object of study of this research) (Decreto 140/2009, of 8<sup>th</sup> September 2009). One of the questions we have to ask

ourselves is how these programmes improve the educational and employment opportunities of young people. Analysis of some of these programmes shows curricula that are designed, firstly, to teach key competences for lifelong learning and, secondly, to develop basic skills for employment. These programmes are in the way of what Tiana, Moya and Luengo (2011) identify as *core curriculum* in Spanish educational context. Young people that access to these programmes do not acquire the minimum education (these authors say *enseñanzas mínimas*) and the main aim of these training programmes is to make this minimum education be able to function, with positive results, which are the key competences and basic skills for employment. This facilitates the social, labour and/or educational integration of young people who are undertaking professional training programmes, who are thereby minimizing their vulnerable condition and their risk of social, labour and educational exclusion (Hair *et al.*, 2009; Terzian, Giesen y MwBana, 2009; Turcotte, Lamonde y Beaudoin, 2009).

In short, we can confirm that these programmes are second chance training programmes. As Cresson (1995) says, these are a second opportunity for young people at risk of exclusion because they offer them new opportunities. Training and/or education are effective mechanisms to contend with the risk of exclusion in society, education and workplace.

## Research

The purpose of this research is to show how professional training programmes are a second chance for social, labour and educational inclusion of young people at risk of exclusion. To achieve this, we first want to know why they are at risk of exclusion and which vulnerable factors are significant. So we establish the research question and hypothesis (Albert, 2007; Tamayo, 2006). The research question is: Can young people aged under 21 and who are at risk of exclusion improve their social, labour and educational opportunities of inclusion when they finish a professional training programme? Hypothesis is: Young people at risk of social, labour and educational exclusion can improve their self-perception, self-esteem, motivation and responsibility if they undertake a professional training programme; consequently, they can improve their inclusion in labour and educational contexts.

Using a mixed methodology in this research, that is, characterized by a quantitative and qualitative focus (Hernández-Sampieri, Fernández-Collado y Baptista, 2006), data were gathered according to a triangular procedure of sources and instruments. Three sources of data were used: questionnaire (young people), interviews (tutors, and entrepreneurs) and documental analysis (training programmes).

## Sample

The sample of this research was 228 young people, 16 tutors, 9 entrepreneurs and 17 training programmes, of 12 professional specializations, selected in 7 municipalities of Barcelona (Hospitalet de Llobregat, Vilanova i la Geltrú, Sant Feliu de Llobregat, Sabadell, Montcada-Reixach, Granollers, and Pineda de Mar) where questionnaires were distributed and interviews were carried out. The selection process and method of the sample were intentional and non-probabilistic.

**TABLE 1. Sample**

<b>Municipalities of Barcelona</b>	<b>Youths</b>	<b>Tutors</b>	<b>Entrepreneurs</b>	<b>Programmes</b>
Hospitalet de Llobregat	11	2	-	1
Vilanova i la Geltrú	44	3	-	3
Sant Feliu de Llobregat	38	1	-	3
Sabadell	42	3	-	3
Montcada-Reixach	16	2	5	1
Granollers	23	2	-	2
Pineda de Mar	54	3	4	4
	<b>228</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>

### *Instruments and Procedure*

#### *Quantitative data: questionnaire*

Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire and were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences programme (SPSS). The questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first one was 29 items about the personal profile, family, educational and employment backgrounds of the young people. The second one was a self-perception scale of 50 items about mastery of key competences.

The questionnaire was validated by external and internal procedures. External validation (experts' validation technique): the questionnaire was sent to 20 experts, who had to assess the importance, uniqueness and significance of the items. 13 of them (65% of the entire sample of experts) gave their assessment and 81% considered the items of the questionnaire to be important, clear and relevant. Internal validation (reliability): the Cronbach alpha coefficient of reliability ranged from 0.81 (pilot sample of 16 youths) to 0.85 (final sample of 228 youths).

Questionnaire was only answered by young people within thirty minutes. First step was to explain them the aim of the research and why they had to answer the questionnaire. They committed to answer it. This was the second step of the process. Youths did it without more difficulties. Maybe, the most difficulties in their answers were with items of the second part of the questionnaire. For them was quite difficult to say how they saw themselves.

#### *Qualitative data: interview and documental analysis*

Qualitative data were collected through interviews and documental analysis.

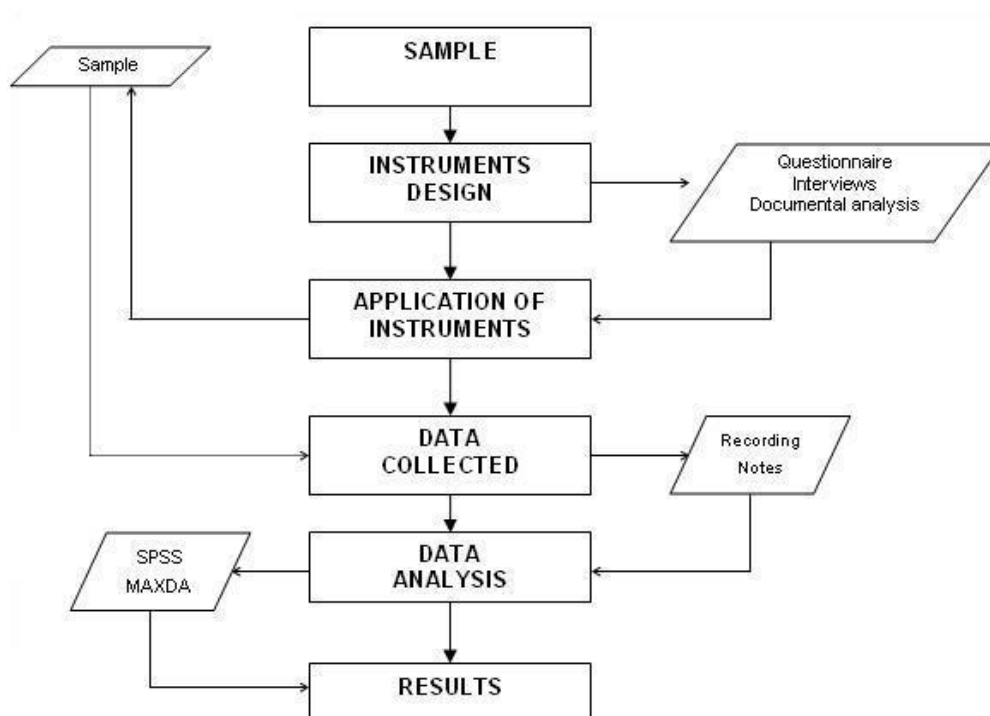
Interview data were collected through 37 semi-structured individual and group interviews and were carried out with tutors and entrepreneurs. During the interviews, questions were asked on personal, family and educational profile of young people; on curricula, methodology, assessment process, and viability of training programmes; on training practices; on profiles of organisations and profiles of tutors; and on itineraries after the programme. Data were analysed using the MAXQDA programme. Salient themes were transformed into conceptual categories (codes) such as young people, training programmes, organisations, tutors and itineraries. Each of these categories breaks into subcategories (subcodes).

Data of documental analysis were collected through paper and digital documents of employment training programmes and were analysed in the same way as the interview data. Salient themes were transformed into conceptual categories such as specialization training, target group (young people), collaborative agents (tutors, entrepreneurs, and others) and curricula (aims, methodology, contents, and assessment process of the programmes).

To gain access to the research context, the researcher got in touch with responsible of every training program. They were agreeing to collaborate on the research as young people, tutors and entrepreneurs.

Next figure shows procedure.

**FIGURE 1. Procedure**



## Results

The structure of presentation of the results follows the purposes of the research in order to answer the question and to accept or reject the hypothesis. The first part presents quantitative and qualitative results about young people's profiles and the vulnerable factors that have to do with their educational failure. The second part concerns factors which should lead us to consider professional training programmes as second chances for young people in educationally vulnerable situations.

### *First part of results: young people's profile and vulnerable factors*

Quantitative analysis of the data from questionnaires shows young people's personal, educational and competency profile, from which vulnerable factors can be deduced.

Young people's personal profile is described by variables such as age, gender, language, nationality and economic status of families. Young people's educational profile is described by age of dropping out of school and educational aspirations of young people of this research. Young people's competency profile is described by some key competences, such as competence in linguistic communication, mathematical competence, digital competence, autonomy and personal initiative, social and civic competence, labour competence, health care competence, competence in interaction with physical world, and competence in learning to learn. The analysis of young people's profile gives us clues about how they see themselves, their emotions, esteem, motivations, behaviours, relationships, interactions, or experiences regarding to their school lives during compulsory secondary education.

About young people's age and educational profile, 100% of respondents are less than 21 years old and have no academic credentials because those are pre-requisites to gain access to these programmes. 78.9% are aged between 16 and 18 and dropped out of school before the minimum age (16 years old), mainly when they were 14-15 years old. However, 95.2% of respondents would like to continue their professional training process when they finish the current programme. Their main reasons are employment, educational and/or personal reasons (46% stated employment reasons, 27% personal reasons, and 22% educational reasons. 5% argued other reasons). Only 4.8% do not want to continue their training process because they would like to work when they finish the current programme.

Males are the most representative sample. 74.6% of respondents are it. That is, the number of males on these programmes is higher than the number of females and that would be by specialization of the programmes. Electrical, mechanical and building are the main specializations and demand for these is higher among men than among women (e.g. 114 men and 5 women demanded these specializations). Only the specializations of marketing and administration attract more women (e.g. 34 women and 14 men demanded these specializations).

Catalonia is the place where 72.8% of the sample was born and 27.2% was born abroad, mainly South America and Morocco. Most of these latter have lived in Catalonia for 3 years; hence they have been taught in the Catalan educational context.

The most prevalent language is Spanish (55% speak Spanish all the time) and the least is Catalan (only 4% normally speak Catalan). 41% speak Spanish, Catalan and/or other languages (mainly Arabic) interchangeably.

The socio-economic condition of young people's families is characterized by low incomes. The parents of 27.4% are unemployed and those of another 72.6% have precarious employment (e.g. they are working without contract).

Young people's competency profile is described by young people's self-perception of their mastery of key competences that is classified in three categories that are defined by the maximum mean values of the scale (1-4) and the average deviation ( $D_{\bar{x}} = 1$ ). These are low mastery (mean range 1.00-2.00), medium mastery (mean range 2.01-3.00) and high mastery (mean range 3.01-4.00). Under the mean score of this research (mean=3.04; sd=.31), which is higher than arithmetical mean ( $\bar{x}=2.50$ ), young people of the sample (n=228) perceive a medium-high mastery of their key competences. Overall results of the analysis of each competence show that young people have a good self-perception of mastery of these (mean ranges 2.92-3.23), as the next table shows.



**TABLE 2. Mean of young people's self-perception of their mastery of key competences**

COMPETENCES	$\bar{x}$		$\bar{x}$
Competence in linguistic communication	<b>2.92</b>	Instrumental competences	<b>2.90</b>
Mathematical competence	<b>2.75</b>		
Digital competence	<b>3.04</b>		
Competence in interaction with the physical word	<b>2.69</b>		
Social and civic competence	<b>3.17</b>		
Labour competence	<b>3.12</b>		
Autonomy and personal initiative	<b>3.21</b>		
Physical health care	<b>3.00</b>	Health care competence	<b>3.15</b>
Emotional and Social health care	<b>3.23</b>		
Mental health care	<b>3.23</b>		
Learning to learn	<b>3.13</b>		

Source: Olmos, 2011

Instrumental competences (digital competence, competence in linguistic communication and mathematic competence, particularly the latter two) are perceived by young people as the lowest ( $\bar{x}=2.90$ ). All these competences relate to the factors regarding to school lives of those students, reminding ourselves that they have learning difficulties which may cause them to drop out of school early. Likewise, young people have low perception of other competences as competence in interaction with the physical world and physical health care competence (mean ranges 2.69-3.00). These competences can be relate to the relationships and interactions of these young people and this low perception contrasts with the perception from competences such as social, civic and labour competence, autonomy and personal initiative, or competence in learning to learn (mean ranges 3.12-3.17) that can be relate to young people's relationships and interactions too. Hálasz and Michel (2011) refer these competences in terms of personal, interpersonal and intercultural competences that cover all forms of behaviours. As we shall see, these results do not match up with tutors' and entrepreneurs' perceptions.

Qualitative analysis of interview data gives us additional information on the young people's personal, educational and competency profile.

Tutors and entrepreneurs say that disruptive behaviour, truancy and low resilience (that is, low self-control, low self-esteem, low motivation and negative self-perception) are characteristic features of these young people's behavioural profile. However, both are agreeing that these young people who are undertaking these programmes improve their motivations and aspirations; many of them continue their education in official professional training programme; but only if they perceive the training to be in accordance with their aspirations because young people on these programmes are not used to studying, and consequently they refuse academic tasks. If they perceive these programmes as academic programmes, they probably leave them.

Another reason why young people probably leave the training programmes is the economic situation of their families. Tutors have explained that the situation is very difficult. Families have low incomes and many of parents have two jobs in order to increase family incomes; so, many of those young people feel that they have to leave the training programmes because they have to contribute to family budgets or they have to share family responsibilities.

All the tutors interviewed and some entrepreneurs think that young people's mastery of key competences is low, mainly in instrumental competences (competence in linguistic communication, mathematical and digital competences) and social and civic competence (social skills including

responsibility), however, young people are not aware of this. Meanwhile, other entrepreneurs assess young people's mastery of key competences positively, mainly competences related to adaptability, punctuality, responsibility and autonomous capacity to work and learn.

### *Second part of results: Initial Professional Qualification Programmes (IPQP)*

The reason of these programmes is the high index of school dropout (over 40% in some municipalities). It is very important to find alternatives for young people at risk of academic failure, and to meet the productive demand of municipalities. Therefore, the target group of the programmes is young people without academic credentials, with learning difficulties, educational needs, disruptive behaviour, and/or low qualifications. Obviously, they are young people at risk of social, labour and educational exclusion.

Qualitative analysis of data suggests a kind of training programmes with a main aim that is to acquire and to develop key competences for lifelong learning. If young people who are at risk of social, educational and employment exclusion master these competences, they can improve their opportunities to get a job. Likewise, they can improve their educational opportunities.

To this end, the IPQP (training programmes of this research) have a modular structure. They have three modules (A, B and C). The first two are compulsory, the third is optional. Each one gives specific training. Module A trains in job skills (in order of professional specialization programme), module B trains in key competences for lifelong learning (see Table II) and module C trains in academic skills to achieve ESO title (this is, compulsory secondary education level). All of these have a practical, flexible and personalized methodology that make possible to respect each young person's learning process. Likewise, young people learn through projects related to their life experiences and their future job experiences.

The assessment and guidance processes take place throughout the programmes. In fact, when young people are doing their tasks, they are also assessed and guided. The main assessment and guidance tools are tutorship, observation, trainee's diary, forms and reports of organisations, and two kinds of assessment strategies are used: self-assessment (each trainee assesses themselves) and co-assessment (each trainee assesses others). During interviews tutors told us about the assessment criteria. For them, academic knowledge as instrumental competence is important and they have to assess it. However, at the beginning of the programmes, tutors focus more on behaviour than on learning. They teach and assess attitudes such as punctuality, hygiene, responsibility, empathy, or respectful behaviour. Before to be trained in academic knowledge, young people of these programmes have to be trained in key competences such as social and civic competence, autonomy and personal initiative, or competence in health care. These competences are the lowest and the most important ones for their social, labour and education inclusion.

## **Discussion and conclusions**

Currently, young people aged under 21 that do not have academic credentials are at risk of exclusion. They have many difficulties in getting a job; this prevents their participation in social and educational contexts. This situation of exclusion can mean for them losing opportunities that others have because they decided to stay in the educational system (Daniels y Cole, 2010). However, we should ask what factors have led these young people to be in a vulnerable situation and at risk of exclusion.

This research explains some possible factors and educational failure is one of these, although not the only one. For example, all youths in this research dropped out of school very early, without

getting any academic credentials, but they have other common characteristics related to their personal, behavioural, family, educational and employment profile. So, here, we ask ourselves once more if educational failure is a cause or a consequence of the vulnerable situation of these young people.

We start from the assumption that educational failure is the most important cause of the social, educational and employment vulnerable situation, and that the other factors contribute to understanding it.

Many studies argue that school dropout is a consequence of multiple factors that could be personal, sociocultural, family and institutional (Adame y Salvà, 2010; Côté y Bynner, 2008; Fernández-Enguita, Mena y Riviere, 2010; Mora, 2010; Roca-Cobo, 2010). Examples include variables such as gender, language, economical needs, social class, immigrant condition, poor academic performance, lack of self-confidence, low motivation, feeling of time-wasting in school, or guidance processes, to name a few, and the results of this research confirm some of these variables as ones which vulnerable young people have in common.

Gender is considered a factor in educational failure. For example, Fernández-Enguita, Mena, and Riviere (2010) show in their study that 40% of boys drop out of school early compared with 29% of girls. Hence, if we remember that one of the programme's prerequisites is having no academic credentials and if 74.6% of student registration of these training programmes is men, we could think that gender is an educational vulnerable factor, and we can hypothesize that men's school failure rates are higher than women's. However, in this research, we cannot affirm it so may be we should to reject this hypothesis because the main reason that explains differences between percentages is the specialization of the programmes, as we argued at the results. Electrical, mechanical and building are the main specializations of the programmes and demand for these is higher among men than among women. Wherefore, in this research, gender is not considered as one of the main factors in educational failure, although it should be considered in another research contexts. Language is considered as another educational vulnerable factor for the analysis. Some authors (Artigas-Pallares, Rigau-Ratera y García-Nonell, 2007; Martínez-Otero, 2009; Rutter, Giller y Hagell, 2000) show in their studies that language (linguistic communication competence) is an important factor in educational failure. It is a key element in learning process because it uses to communicate, to express oneself, and to think. In context of Catalonia, Catalan and Spanish are both official languages, but Catalan is the first language in these training programmes and in the Catalan compulsory education context. When young people apply, they need to speak, write and read in Catalan. For foreign people this is an important restriction. When they have lived in Catalonia for less than one year, they are unlikely to have learned Catalan. Hence, language is a factor of exclusion and academic failure, especially for young people from immigrant families. As a factor closely linked to linguistic communication competence, language could explain young people's difficulties in their training and educational processes, and their low perception of mastery of instrumental competences.

Difficulties in linguistic communication competence and in their training processes explain behavioural profile of young people of these training programmes. Tutors and entrepreneurs think that these young people show low self-confidence, low self-esteem, and low motivation, chiefly at the beginning of the training programme. They refer these features as disruptive behaviours as many authors do (Cheney, Flower y Templeton, 2008; Kazdin y Buela, 1994; Carrascosa y Martínez, 1998; Walker et al., 1996). But as these youths progress in the training programme, they improve this behavioural profile and increase their self-confidence, self-esteem, and motivations because they perceive that they are able to achieve the aims of this applied and personalized training programmes. Likewise, the relationship between these young people and educational workers, including tutors and entrepreneurs, is very important (O'Riordan, 2011). Educational workers' attitudes toward these young people's capacities also are (Kim, 2011). So, guidance

process is another interesting factor to be considered in this research. Many of these young people are wrongly guided when they are in compulsory secondary school. Teachers of secondary level think that these training programmes are the best way for these youths to get an academic credential because they assume that these programmes do not entail the kind of work required in school. Tutors of the IPQP get complaints because when a young person is undertaking the training programme, s/he has to work so hard, s/he has to study. These programmes are not easy for them. However trainees learn because learning process is personalized and teaching methodology is quite different from a scholarly approach (Adame y Salvà 2010).

Language (linguistic communication competence), behaviours (self-confidence, self-esteem, and motivations), relationships with other, such as tutors or entrepreneurs, attitudes of other toward vulnerable young people, and guidance processes are factors that explain academic and/or educational failure in this research. This latter is a complex concept and one of the reasons why many youths are excluded from society, education and workplace. The IPQP, professional training programmes studied in this research, provide training in order to reduce the risk of exclusion and to improve young people's opportunities in employment, or further education. This is, professional training programmes give young people, who are in vulnerable situations, new opportunities for social, labour and educational inclusion; therefore, these programmes are presented as second chance training programmes.

Now the question is how they operate. These programmes organize the curricula around training in key competences and job skills; the former enables the trainee to gain access to educational, social and labour contexts and the latter enables access to employment. In other words, curricula of IPQP are defined not only in terms of knowledge and/or disciplinary areas, but also of capacities, attitudes, practical skills, abilities, motivation, emotions, ethical values and behaviours (Halász y Michel, 2011; Tiana, Moya y Luengo, 2011).

When a young person is undertaking one of these training programmes their confidence in their capacities changes, and many of them think or rethink about their goals (Olmos, 2011). At the end of the programme, if you ask a young person what s/he would like to do next, many of them say that they would like to continue learning. They would like to do a formal professional training programme. They want to learn a job. They know this is a hard process because they know their restrictions, but they believe in themselves and in their capabilities. This is the result of the programme. However, it would be interesting to know how many of them try to achieve this, and how much of them succeed. These questions would be a worthwhile area for new research.

In summary, the arguments presented here confirm the hypothesis of this research and answer our research question:

- Young people aged under 21 who are in social, labour and educational vulnerable situations improve their social, labour and educational opportunities of inclusion when they undertake one of these employment training programmes.
- When a young person in a vulnerable situation has finished one of these training programmes, s/he improves her/his self-esteem, self-confidence, motivations and responsibility; consequently, s/he improves her/his opportunities of inclusion in social, labour and educational contexts.

Thereby, we conclude that professional training programmes addressed to young people in educational vulnerable situation are viable and second chance training programmes. However, these programmes can only succeed if these are flexible, transferable, efficient and attitudinal programmes (Shaw, Grimes y Bulman, 2005), and if everybody, that is, young people, tutors, entrepreneurs, or other professionals are involved, taking an active and responsible role.

Nevertheless, we can note some limitations. For example, although young people improve their opportunities of inclusion and their profile, as we argue up, we do not analyse how much. Likewise, we do not analyse other programmes in other contexts to compare. But these limitations become opportunities and prospective researches: why not to study young people's itinerary after these programmes, and why not to compare these programmes with European programmes and analyse contrast results. Here are two research ways that this research gives us.

As Fernández-Enguita, Mena, and Riviere (2010) argue, to drop out of school early is a personal decision; albeit one conditioned by complex factors, but undertaking one of these professional training programmes has to be a young people's decision too. It is they who must decide whether to take this second opportunity.

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